

338.4791

H3M

1952

1952

Report on Montana's

TOURIST



INDUSTRY

Advertising Office

Montana Highway Commission

OCLC 426150623 WF

Montana State Library



3 0864 1006 6880 8

December 17, 1952

State Highway Commission of Montana
Helena, Montana

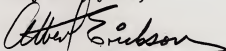
Gentlemen:

The march of Montana's tourist industry continued at a record pace in 1952 as will be seen from the following report. Since the resumption of unrestricted vacation travel after World War II, Montana's travel business has increased 50 percent.

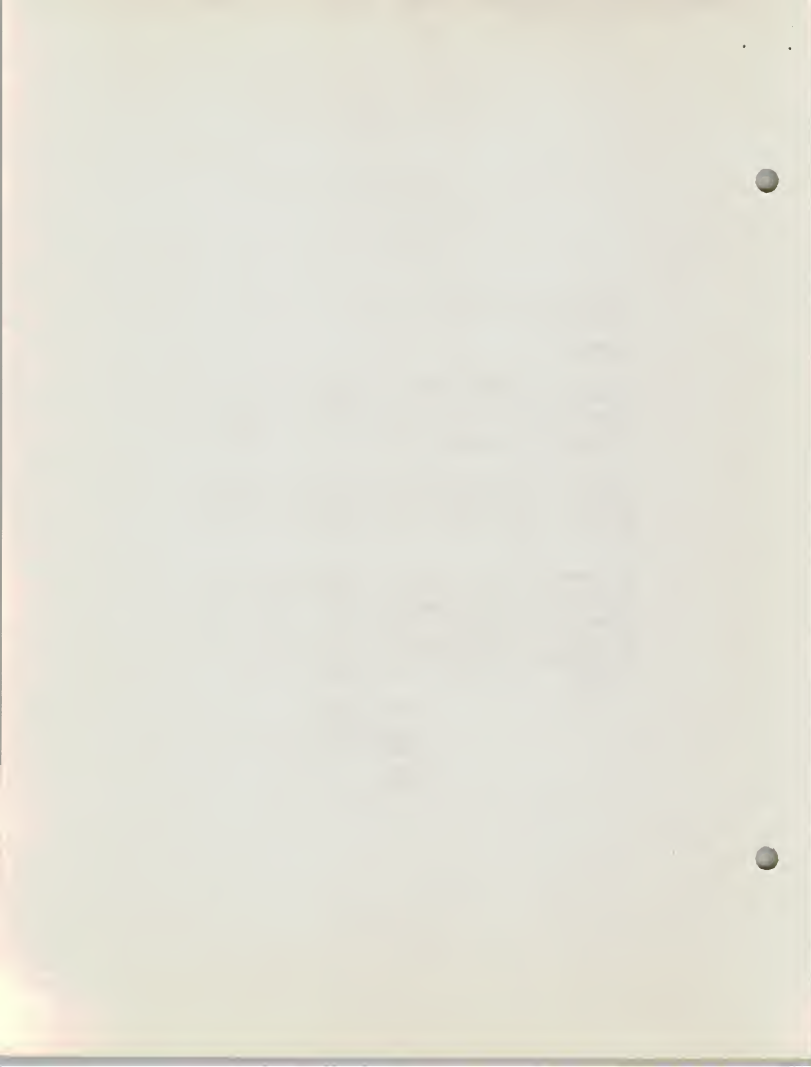
In the not too distant future, it is entirely possible that, with the right kind of advertising and promotion, Montana's tourist industry will become the second largest industry in the state. It is edging now toward the \$100,000,000 mark.

This report contains the results and analysis of the annual travel study conducted by the Advertising Office in cooperation with the port of entry stations. By use of these stations, Montana has one of the most authentic and accurate travel surveys to be found anywhere. It is the aim of this report to better evaluate the growing importance of the Treasure State's tourist business.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Albert Erickson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Albert" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Erickson".

Albert Erickson
Advertising Director



1952 TRAVEL SUMMARY

During the past five years, the Advertising Office, through the port of entry stations, has distributed 215,000 travel data questionnaire cards. Over 50,000 of these have been returned by visitors. Revisions for the 1952 report are based upon 2,685 completed questionnaires.

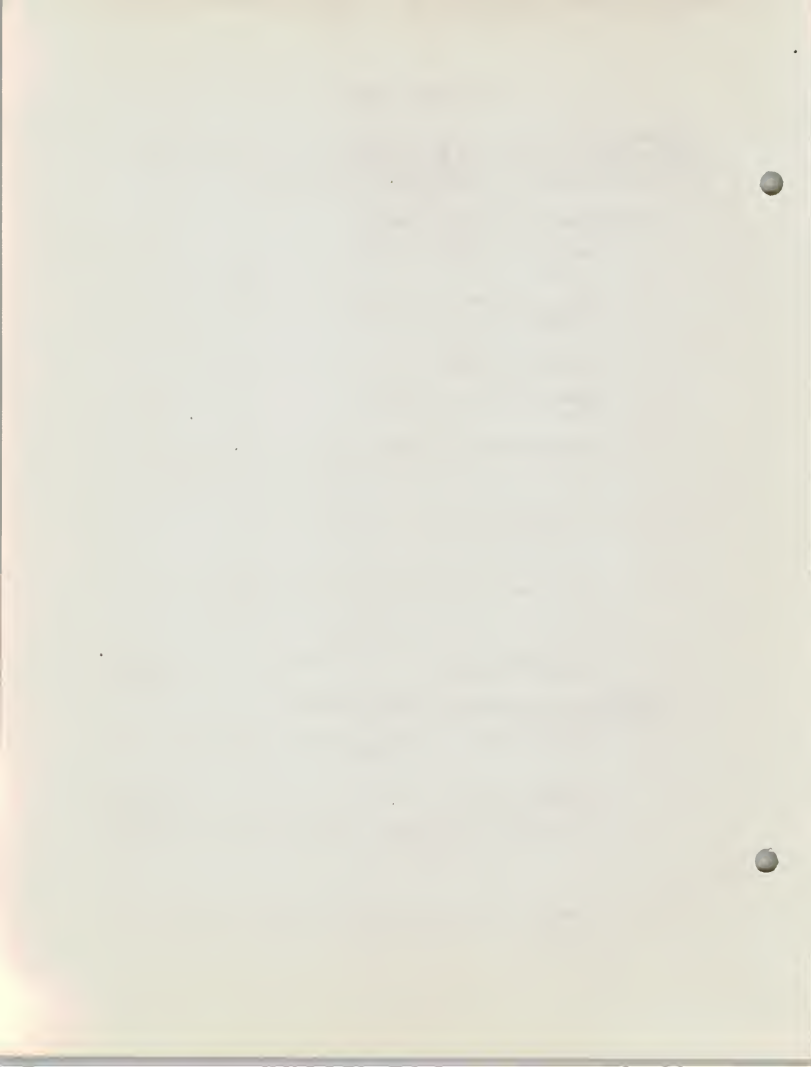
Visitors Entering Montana by Automobile

Number of Car Visitors During Summer months	273,532
Number of Passengers entering during summer	902,655
Number of non-resident cars during entire year	745,554
Number of visitors by car for entire year	2,460,328
Average number of passengers per car	3.3
Average length of stay	4.2 days
Average number of miles driven in Montana per car	605
Average expenditure per car per stay	\$89.78
Average expenditure per person per stay	\$27.38
Average expenditure per person per day	\$ 6.52
Computed expenditure by 2,460,328 auto- mobile visitors	\$67,353,939

Visitors Entering Montana by Plane, Train or Bus

Computed number of visitors arriving by transportation other than auto*	468,634
Computed expenditures by plane, train and bus passengers	<u>\$12,829,324</u>
TOTAL TOURIST EXPENDITURES IN MONTANA DURING 1952	\$80,183,263

*(American Automobile Assn. estimates 84% of tourists travel by car, 16% by other conveyances)



Tourist Spending Hits All-Time
High of \$80,183,262

Nearly 3,000,000 visitors spent over 80 million dollars in Montana this year to maintain travel as the third largest industry in the Treasure State. It was the sixth consecutive year, since the end of the war, that the tourist business has climbed.

On a per capita basis, the tourist business amounted to \$135 for every Montanan. These figures apply only to visitors from outside of the state and do not include expenditures by Montana residents for Montana vacations.

It is noted that out-of-state travel on Montana highways is year round, particularly noticeable is the number of travelers on the highways in the winter time. Montana's winter snow removal and sanding program is beginning to pay handsome dividends.

For the record, it should be noted that 1952, from a weather standpoint, was an ideal tourist year. An early spring permitted tourist travel well in advance of the closing of schools with visitor cars in ever-increasing numbers on our highways late in April and early May. September and October proved that fall can be the nicest time of the year in the Land of Shining Mountains, and travel through Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks continued at a good clip throughout September. For the first time in many seasons, Going-to-the-Sun highway was open and free of snow into November.

Summer Tourist Traffic
Shows 14.3% Increase

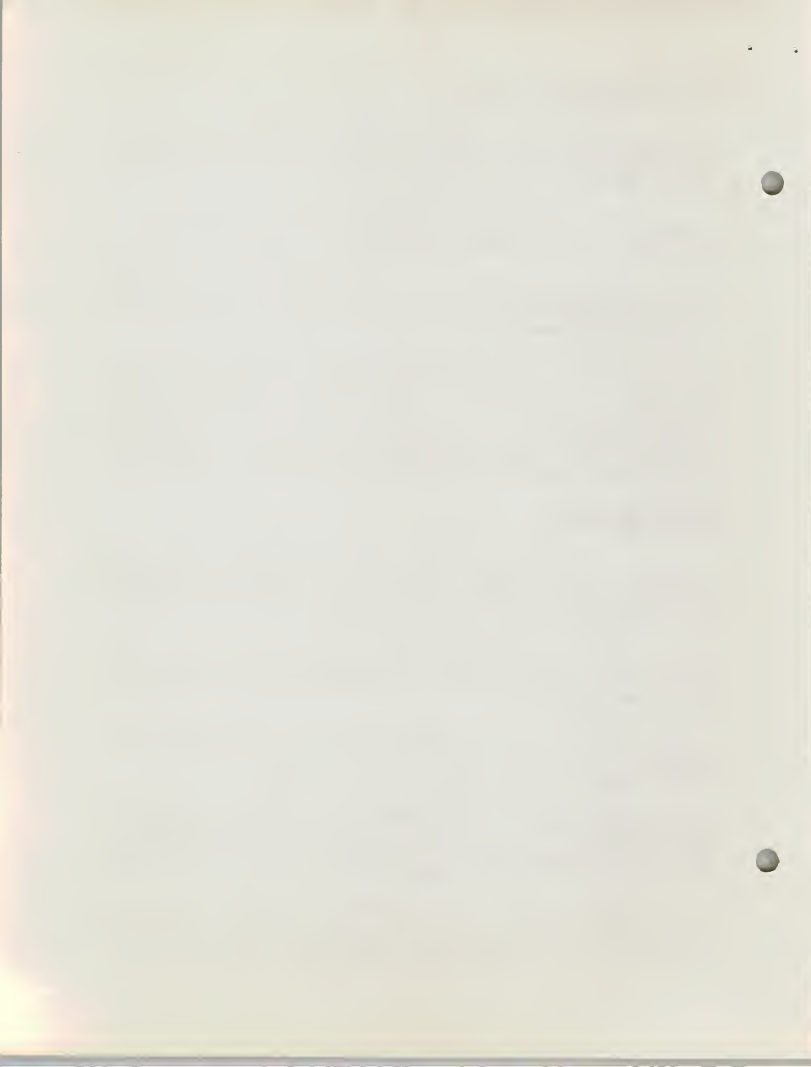
Through operation of nine port of entry stations at strategic points on the main highways, the State Highway Commission of Montana obtains quite a thorough check on the number of tourist cars and number of passengers entering the state daily during the summer. Attendants at the stations count all cars, note state of origin and number of passengers.

From June 14, 1952 through Sept. 6, 1952, a total of 273,532 out-of-state vehicles were counted at the entry stations, compared to 239,135 for a similar period in 1951. This represented a 14.3% increase in tourist traffic for the 1952 summer season.

It was found that each tourist vehicle carried more people than a year ago, with the 1952 average being 3.3 persons per car compared to 3.2 persons in 1951. A total of 902,655 visitors were checked at the port of entry stations during the summer.

Operation of these entry stations are not only of immense importance in obtaining accurate travel statistics, but Montana is rapidly acquiring a national reputation for its friendliness. Files in the Advertising Office are filled with glowing "thank you's" from tourists all over the United States for the welcome and help given them by port of entry attendants.

Visitors from all of the Canadian provinces and 26 foreign countries toured Montana this year. It was heartening to note the continued steady increase of tourist business from our northern neighbor--Canada. A favorable rate of exchange for Canadian citizens helped bring them across the border.



Vacation Travel Is
Not Cheap

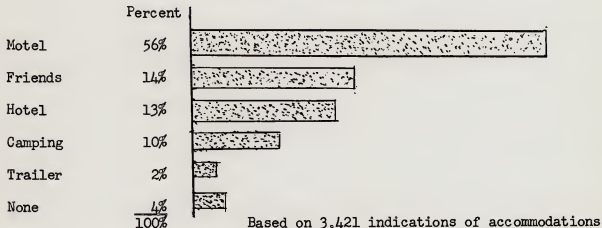
One of the highest daily expenditures per tourist was registered this year. Spiralling costs of food and lodging definitely make traveling much more expensive than five or six years ago. Daily expenditure per tourist showed a hike from \$5.70 a year ago to \$6.52 this year. Comparative daily expenditures per tourist for the past five years were as follows:

Year	Average Daily Expenditure
1948	\$6.40
1949	5.69
1950	5.38
1951	5.70
1952	6.52

Most Montana Tourists
Make Use of Motels

A new section was added to the Montana travel survey this year to determine the type of accommodations tourists were using. Many of them, of course, used more than one type of accommodation.

"What Kind of Lodging did you Use in Montana?"



Tourist Gas Taxes Help
Build Montana Highways

That it is imperative to keep tourist traffic at a high level in Montana, is readily seen from the gas tax income reaped from tourist travel. Tourists pay the same 6¢ per gallon gasoline tax as Montana residents.

From the travel survey cards, it was determined that the average tourist in Montana covered 605 miles in his ramblings around the Treasure State during 1952. This is a drop from 634 miles in 1951 and was undoubtedly due to the fact that the length of stay in the state was a day less.

Using the American Automobile Assn. figure of 15 miles to the gallon for the ordinary motorist, we find that the tourist payment to our highway



program was substantial. In covering the 605 miles, he burned up 40 gallons of gasoline. The state gasoline tax on these 40 gallons was \$2.40 for each and every tourist (on the average). Projecting this we find:

745,554 Non-resident cars were in Montana in 1952

745,554 x \$2.40 = \$1,789,329 Gasoline taxes paid
by tourists while in Montana

Montana's highway program is financed on a 43% state
funds and 57% Federal aid basis.

43% -- \$1,789,329

57% -- \$2,371,901

\$4,161,230

Montana Highway Program Made
Possible by Tourist Gasoline
Tax Payments

This amount is approximately the same paid by tourists in Montana in 1951.

Length of Tourist Stay
Continues to Slump

It was pointed out in the 1951 tourist study that the average length of stay of visitors to Montana is dropping. This year it took another header, sliding from 5.2 days in 1951 to 4.2 days in 1952. This is a very serious situation, and demands the immediate attention and action of all those interested in the further advancement of travel in Montana.

Had it not been for the fact that nearly a half million more non-residents visited Montana this year, the total expenditure would most certainly have shown a decline. As it was the amount of money spent per person dropped simply because they stayed one full day less than a year ago.

With the decline in the average length of stay, it means that we must serve more and more customers to derive the same benefit. It means that hotels, motels and other accommodations can serve our visitors only four nights instead of five.

Montana has always been plagued by a lot of cross state traffic. It is getting worse. We have a huge tourist movement across the state by transient visitors who are coming from the west going east or vice versa. Montana is not their vacation objective. They are speeding over our highways and at the most are spending one or two days in the state.

We also have the vacationist whose objective is Yellowstone and Glacier National parks. Travelers heading for these playgrounds spend as little time in Montana as possible--they buy a few meals, a night's lodging and some gasoline--that is all. They are not cognizant of Montana's many vacation attractions, outside of the national parks. It is our problem to acquaint these visitors with Lewis and Clark Cavern, the Custer Battlefield, Virginia City, Gates of the Mountains, Fort Peck dam and the many other places of tourist interest.



Below are comparative lengths of stay in Montana for the past four years. You will note how it has dropped steadily:

Year	Average length of stay
1948	5.0
1949	5.4 days
1950	5.5 days
1951	5.2 days
1952	4.2 days

Actually we are getting a lot of tourists in Montana, but they don't know very much about the Treasure State. This is primarily a problem of education in which more advertising, promotion, pamphlets and ballyhoo are needed. It is not entirely a state function. Much of this selling has to be done on the community level.

Montana to begin with is not "tourist conscious." We are not going out of our way to sell tourists on Montana in the big way that California, Arizona, Oregon, Colorado and some of the other states are doing. Montana communities should undertake programs designed to keep each and every tourist one day longer. Many tourist committees are failing to recognize in their own communities places and things of tourist interest which can help hold the visitor an hour, a half day or a day longer.

If it had been possible to hold the 2,928,962 non-resident visitors to Montana just one day more, it would have boosted our tourist business \$19,195,632, or almost enough to reach the \$100,000,000 mark.

Visitors Like Montana as a Vacation State, Appreciate Courtesies and Friendliness

Comments on Montana as a vacation state were, in the main, favorable. There was a mixed response regarding the highways. Many noted the numerous construction projects under way and remarked that Montana's highway system would be greatly improved when this work was finished. Others objected strenuously to the length of mileage torn up and the rough detours.

By and large Montana's magnificent scenery came in for many compliments. Our guests like Virginia City, the Red Lodge-Cooke City road, the Gallatin canyon, Glacier Park, only to mention a few. They also appreciated the greeting at the ports of entry and were high in their praise of the unique historical roadside markers.

There were some squawks too! The principal beef seemed to be about the lack of roadside campgrounds and picnic spots. Also the state parks came in for criticism.

All in all, Montana's visitors enjoyed their vacation in the Land of Shining Mountains and many wrote they would be back for repeat vacations.

